

August 25, 1996, CHICAGO, IL: "The Cook County Coroner's office has reported that the unclaimed bodies of forty-four victims of the recent heatwave will be buried at Homewood Memorial Garden Cemetery. This is one of the largest mass burials in the state's history."

We Gave Them No Mirrors

We gave them no mirrors, those solitary
and unclaimed who share hot midsummer winds.
Denied reflections for relief
on inside surfaces of unknown regions.
Unkept, unimpaired, unbefriended;
unwashed?
...Unknown.

Those acrid breezes pass wilderness
whose every forest leaf cannot be known,
but known that each is expelled,
then carried on windborne twigs,
long since buried in ancient humus.

Phantoms are the eyes, the voices
that glint and steal our reflections.
But leaves, yet tethered and green,
on what do they reflect? Blown
from birth to death on a zephyr
whose warm, moist current nurtures,
then coils up, strikes searingly, and moves on.

Shout, shout, shout
into the scorching wind, lest our
shoes be topped by fresh humus
from the soil of Homewood Garden,
where forty-four, and more, are
rendered, finalized, transformed, put to rest
Claimed not by society, but buried by the body-politic.